

CRIPPLED WYCOMBE GO DOWN FIGHTING

Ex-Wanderer Leads Sutton To Triumph

By 'Nova'

Wycomber Wanderers 3, Sutton United 5

PAUL BATES, terror of so many defences at Loakes Park while with Wycombe, returned to his old stamping ground for the second time within three days on Wednesday evening and inspired his Sutton team-mates to victory over a crippled but gallant Wanderers' team.

After regaining his feel of the ground with the county side on Monday, Paul pulled out all the stops for the Isthmian League game against his old colleagues, who finished with only seven fit men, and made Wycombe supporters wish he was once again wearing the light and dark blue of the Wanderers.

Although the evening's glory belonged mainly to Bates, there were some other magnificent individual performances, notably from Sutton's Dave Hermitage, who notched as efficient a hat-trick as has been seen at Loakes Park for some years, and from Len Worley who gave a vintage display of body-swerving, ball control and passing.

Cheers came at the end of 90 exciting minutes both for Sutton and for Wycombe—a brave, die-hard side—with all three inside forwards unable to raise more than a gallop for over half the game because of leg injuries, and with young Pete Sewell playing for 40 minutes with a terribly swollen face after stopping a Bates pile-driver.

Sutton deserved to win, for even when Wycombe were at full strength they looked the more capable up front, but it was only two goals in the last five minutes that gave them the somewhat flattering margin of victory.

FIRST BLOOD

From the very start both sides used the open spaces and shot from any angle and range, and although the visitors seemed likeliest to score, Wycombe in fact took the lead in the 28th minute, when a neat movement finished with Lowen pushing the ball to the unmarked Horseman, who scored.

Then, after Maharg, who hurt his ankle after only a quarter of an hour, had seen a header cleared off the line, Sutton broke away for Hermitage to run 35 yards unchallenged to equalise.

Lowen made a late appearance for the second half with his ankle heavily strapped and within five minutes Horseman had joined the casualties after a collision. Sutton took advantage of the confusion in the Wycombe ranks and in the 51st minute Bates cracked home a goal to put them in front.

Gradually, however, with Gale in impressive form again and Roystone like a rock, Wycombe recovered and equalised when Lowen backheeled from a Hodges pass. But within a minute Sutton took the lead again through Hermitage.

Worley and Gale inspired a tremendous Wycombe rally but their work was wasted five minutes from time, when Hermitage headed in Sutton's fourth and Meekin added a fifth only seconds later. Lowen did grab a goal two minutes from the end but from then on the Sutton defence stood firm.

Wycombe.—C. Bunting; J. Beck, P. Sewell; C. Gale, P. Roystone, A. Lewis; L. Worley, T. Horse; J. Shears; E. Powell, R. Adam, E. man, P. Lowen, G. Maharg, P. Hodges.

Sutton.—D. Roffey; T. Shepherd, Clack; I. Meekin, R. Osborne, P. Bates, D. Hermitage, M. Goodall.